

Resiliency Factors

The following resiliency strategies, developmental assets and services are critical character builders for students in at-risk circumstances.

1. Pro-Social Bonding

- a. Increasing bonds of connectedness found between family members, between school and students, and between students and other positive, pro-social bonding groups or activities.
- b. Staff sees themselves as nurturers and work to build positive relationships with students.
- c. Many before, after, and in-school activities are available to students.
- d. The workday is structured to promote meaningful interactions among staff.
- e. The school creates positive bonds with families.
- f. The physical environment of the school is warm, positive, and inviting.

2. Teaching “Life Skills”

- a. The staff teaches refusal skills, assertiveness, healthy conflict resolution, decision-making, stress management, how to make friends, and how to find and interview for a job. The qualities of a good employee are consistently taught to students in a format that emphasizes role-playing and relevance to “real life” situations.
- b. Cooperative learning, i.e., learning focusing on both social skills and academic outcomes, is effectively utilized.
- c. Cooperation between staff is emphasized and encouraged. The staff supports the need for continuous skills development related to effective organizational functioning and effective teaching.
- d. The school offers staff development opportunities on effective organizational change. Participation is encouraged, based on self-identified needs for skill development.

3. Clear, Consistent Boundaries

- a. A clear, firm policy, addressing student behaviors is in place and is consistently enforced.
- b. The intervention process for students (Student Transition and Support Services) is effective.
- c. Boundaries/expectations for school staff are clearly communicated and consistently enforced (e.g., school policies, organizational rules, parent support for family meetings, and family rules). The school fosters a continuous discussion of norms, rules, goals and expectations for staff and students.
- d. Staff model behavioral expectations developed for students and themselves.
- e. The school offers staff development on policy and procedural issues and effective classroom management.

4. Caring and support

- a. Many types of incentives, recognitions, and rewards are in place for students.
- b. Structures and programs are in place in the school (e.g., counseling, support groups, home rooms, etc.) to increase caring and support for students.
- c. Many types of incentives, recognition, and rewards are in place for staff.
- d. The reward system for staff includes recognition for individual risk-taking and achievement. The school has a climate of kindness and encouragement.
- e. Resources needed by students and staff are secured and distributed fairly at the school.
- f. The school ensures that all children have some caring and support by providing school programs such as mentorships, after-school care, and community volunteers that can provide unconditional caring, listening, encouragement, and support.
- g. The school organizes programs so that students identified in at-risk situations have regular contact with at least one caring adult at the school.

5. High Expectations

- a. Staff communicates the belief that all students can succeed clearly and frequently, providing all children with high expectations for success.
- b. Policy and practice assure that little or no labeling (formal or informal) or tracking of students takes place.
- c. Staff communicates the belief that all staff can succeed clearly and frequently.
- d. The school encourages increased understanding of each staff member's contribution and supports job sharing, teaming and other cooperative ventures.
- e. The school provides growth plans with clear outcomes, regular reviews, and supportive feedback.
- f. An attitude of "can do" about students permeates the school and its staff.

6. Opportunities for Meaningful Participation

- a. Student programs which emphasize service to other students, school, and the community are in place.
- b. Students and staff are meaningfully involved in making decisions about the school including decisions about governance and school policy.
- c. Staff roles are defined to include organization-wide responsibilities.
- d. All members of the school community (students, parents, staff) are viewed as resources rather than as problems, objects, or clients.
- e. The school climate emphasized and rewards probing assumptions, doing what really matters, and risk-taking.
- f. Each student should be involved in some positive school program, such as cross-age tutoring or support groups, clubs, or organizations.
- g. The school fosters Service Learning and/or Community Service.